

Section 2

France

READ TO DISCOVER

1. What is French culture like?
2. What are some of the main industries in France?
3. What challenges does France face today?

WHY IT MATTERS

Many Europeans have been concerned about the spread of mad cow disease. Recently, the disease was found in French livestock. Use cnnfyi.com or other **current events** sources to learn about this and other dangerous livestock diseases.

DEFINE

primate city

LOCATE

Paris

Seine River

Lyon

Lille

Marseille

Alps

French Riviera

Corsica

History and Culture

France is one of Europe's largest and most influential countries. Like the United Kingdom, France's culture shows the imprint of successive waves of migrants. Some of the peoples that have shaped French culture include the Gauls, Romans, Franks, and Vikings.

French Society France has a strong cultural identity unified by language and religion. Although some people also speak regional dialects and languages, most speak French. About 90 percent of France's population is Roman



The mistral, a powerful wind that blows from the Alps across southern France, can reach speeds of up to 100 miles per hour (161 kmh).



France has produced many world-famous artists, including Pierre-Auguste Renoir (1841–1919). Renoir's *Le Moulin de la Galette*, a scene showing life in Paris, is considered a masterpiece of impressionism. Impressionism is a style of painting that developed mainly in France in the late 1800s. It attempts to show what one's first impression of a scene is.



The Eiffel Tower is a landmark and symbol of Paris. It was built from 1887 to 1889 to celebrate the 100-year anniversary of the French Revolution. At 984 feet (300 m), the Eiffel Tower was the tallest human-made structure in the world until the completion of New York City's Chrysler Building in 1930.

Catholic. The French government spends money to promote French culture and language.

France has had a long and friendly relationship with the United States. However, today some French people worry about the influence of American culture in Europe. They see the spread of American fast food and media, such as movies, as a threat to their own culture. Some French dislike the fact that English words are creeping into French. They think the United States is responsible because English is becoming the global language of business and technology. To counter this trend, a 366-year-old government agency guards the French language from foreign influences. For example, it has declared that e-mail must be called *courrier électronique* (KOOH-ree-ay ay-lek-trohn-EEK). Some French are also concerned that American corporations are buying a growing number of French businesses.

Cities Paris is the capital and **primate city** of France. A primate city is one that ranks first and dominates a country in terms of population and economy. Paris is also one of Europe's largest and most important cities. About 11 million people live in the metropolitan area. The city was founded more than 2,000 years ago on an island in the middle of the Seine (SAYN) River. Today Paris is France's center for banking, business, communications, education, government, and transportation. The city is also a center for fashion, French culture, and tourism. Important regional cities include Lyon (LYOHN), Lille (LEEL), and the Mediterranean seaport of Marseille (mar-SAY).

✓ **READING CHECK:** **Human Systems** How has France reacted to the influences of American culture?

Connecting to TECHNOLOGY

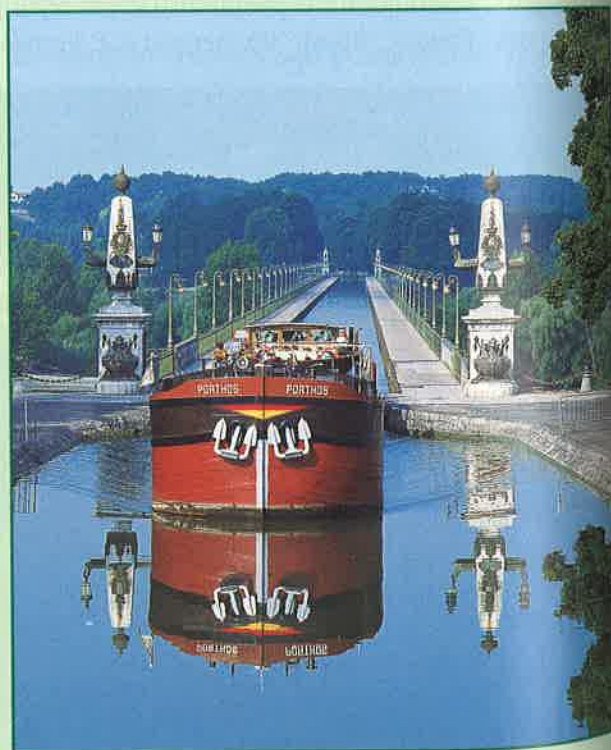
French Waterways

In the 1800s canals and rivers were a popular and economical way to move goods. Later the waterways fell from favor with the introduction of railroads and long-distance trucking. However, today there is a new interest in using waterways for commerce. France is working to increase trade on its rivers and canals. It has Europe's longest system of canals deep enough to move commercial barges. By moving more goods by water, the government hopes to reduce traffic on its roads.

To accomplish this goal, the government lifted many old regulations. River channels have also been deepened, and locks have been removed. These changes have helped speed up travel on the waterways. As a result, more businesses are shipping their goods by water.

Why is such shipping important? Barges are more than twice as energy-efficient as trains and more than five times as efficient as trucks. The increased energy efficiency is good for the economy as well as for the environment. In addition, boats are not as noisy as trains or trucks. This means that they can operate at night in urban areas without bothering people. Boats also provide a safer way to carry dangerous goods.

Analyzing How has the French perception of their water resources changed? What has been the result of this changed perception?



A canal bridge over the Loire River



INTERPRETING THE VISUAL RECORD

A hiker views mountain scenery near Chamonix in the French Alps. France's physical and cultural landscapes attract tourists from around the world and help make tourism one of the country's leading industries. What type of physical feature is shown in this photo? What physical processes created it?

Economy

France has a highly diversified, developed economy. Its workers are some of the most productive in the world. This is true even though they have the shortest workweek—35 hours—and some of the longest vacations—one month—of any workers in the industrial countries.

The French are famous for fashion design. They also produce perfumes, cosmetics, jewelry, glassware, and furniture. Tourism is also important. Millions of people visit Paris, ski in the French Alps, and enjoy the famous Mediterranean coast known as the French Riviera.

Farming remains an important part of the economy. France is second only to the United States in agricultural exports. The French produce high-quality food products and a great variety of agricultural produce. Farmers provide wheat, sugar beets, olives, grapes, and dairy products. France is the world's leading wine producer in both variety and export income.

France's early industries were centered in the northeast near large deposits of coal and iron ore. Those heavy industries are now in decline. However, the country's high-tech industries are developing rapidly. The south is a growing center for aviation, communications industries, and space technology.

READING CHECK: *Environment and Society* Where were early French industries centered? What natural resources were found there?

Issues and Challenges

One of the major issues facing France today is the government's powerful influence over the economy. The French economy is both highly taxed and highly regulated, and many industries are government-owned. Many argue that these controls hurt innovation and creativity. They also make it hard for private businesses to grow. This situation is changing as state-owned businesses and industries are turned over to private owners. This process is called privatization. However, as privatization occurs, many government workers are faced with unemployment.

France's Exports

machinery and transportation equipment; chemicals; iron and steel products; agricultural products; textiles and clothing

Source: Central Intelligence Agency, *The World Factbook 2000*

France's Labor Force



Labor force by occupation:

- Agriculture
- Industry
- Services

Source: Central Intelligence Agency, *The World Factbook 2001*

INTERPRETING THE GRAPH

How does the distribution of France's labor force by occupation relate to France's exports?



Corsica is known for its beautiful Mediterranean landscape, which features rugged mountains and dramatic coastal cliffs. However, economically the island is less developed than much of France, which has led many Corsicans to migrate to the mainland for jobs.

Since the early 1900s many Algerians and Moroccans have been migrating to France in search of jobs. In fact, North Africans now form the largest immigrant group in the country. Immigrants have also come from former French Indochina—Vietnam, Cambodia, and Laos—and from former French colonies in West Africa. Many immigrants live in poorer sections of the major French cities. France's many immigrant communities have helped create distinctive urban landscapes. Many neighborhoods where immigrants live feature non-European restaurants and shops. Bringing these immigrants into French society is another important challenge.

After the British, the French maintained the second-largest colo-

onial empire in the world. France has tried to maintain ties with some of those former colonies, particularly in Africa. The French also have overseas territories that are departments of France. In other words, they are considered part of France. One such department is French Guiana, in South America. Other French territories are mainly islands in the Caribbean, the South Pacific, and the Indian Ocean. They include Guadeloupe, Tahiti, and Réunion. Recent independence movements on the South Pacific island of New Caledonia have led to violence. Violence has also occurred on the large and rugged Mediterranean island of Corsica. Corsica has been part of France since 1768. However, many Corsicans consider themselves culturally distinct from France and want their island to become independent.

✓ **READING CHECK:** *Environment and Society* Why have many Moroccans, Algerians, and other groups of people been immigrating to France?



Review

Define primate city

Working with Sketch Maps On the map you created in Section 1, label France, Paris, Seine River, Lyon, Lille, Marseille, Alps, French Riviera, and Corsica. What is the primate city of France?

Reading for the Main Idea

1. **Human Systems** How is France's culture important to its economy?

2. **Human Systems** How are public policies and decision making influenced by French cultural beliefs?
3. **Human Systems** Where does France still have overseas possessions?

Critical Thinking

4. **Making Generalizations** Why do you think some French workers at government-owned companies might face losing their jobs as their companies are turned over to private ownership?



Organizing What You Know

5. Construct a word web like the one below. Use it to identify sources of American influence on French culture.

